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CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI HOLDS HEARING TO EXAMINE NASA'S FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET REQUEST

Chairwoman to emphasize the need for a balanced space program, the need to be an economic engine, and oversight and accountability for NASA's FY14 Budget

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science (CJS), today chaired a fiscal year 2014 oversight and budgetary hearing for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The hearing included testimony from NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden and NASA Inspector General Paul K. Martin.

"As Chairwoman, I have three priorities for NASA," said Senator Mikulski. "First, NASA must implement a balanced space program. How is NASA moving forward with the program Congress authorized and funded? Second, NASA must be an economic engine. How is NASA putting America to work? Are we out-innovating, out-educating and out-building our competition? And finally, oversight and accountability. I want to know how NASA is ensuring our tax dollars are spent wisely, and how NASA is acting frugally in these frugal times."

Senator Mikulski's opening remarks in full, as prepared for delivery, follow:

"Today, the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee is meeting to examine NASA's 2014 budget request. We welcome NASA Administrator Charles Bolden to testify about NASA's fiscal year 2014 budget request. We have also taken written testimony from NASA's Inspector General, Paul Martin, with regard to the top oversight issues at the agency.

"Before we turn to NASA's budget, I want to congratulate NASA and Orbital Sciences Corporation. Last Sunday, April 21, Antares took its first flight from Wallops Flight Facility. I look forward to the next flight to the International Space Station this summer and to the jobs and industry Antares brings to the Lower Shore.

"As Chairwoman, I have three priorities for NASA. First, NASA must implement a balanced space program. How is NASA moving forward with the program Congress authorized and funded? Second, NASA must be an economic engine. How is NASA putting America to work? Are we out-innovating, out-educating and out-building our competition? And finally, oversight and accountability. I want to know how NASA is ensuring our tax dollars are spent wisely, and how NASA is acting frugally in these frugal times.

"The President's budget request for NASA is \$17.7 billion, \$223 million more than the fiscal year 2013 level, but still \$1 billion less than NASA's highest funding level of \$18.7 billion in fiscal year 2010. The real news in NASA's request is a new proposal to lasso a small asteroid. That mission will cost \$105 million in fiscal year 2014, which NASA claims is a technology stepping stone necessary for meeting the President's long-term goal of landing on an asteroid by 2025. We need a mission and destination for Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion, but lassoing an asteroid could cost \$1 billion to \$2.6 billion. I will want to learn more about both cost and scientific goals for NASA's proposed asteroid mission.

"NASA's request outlines three priorities. The first is the SLS rocket, Orion capsule and related ground systems, with a total request of \$2.7 billion. The second is supporting the International Space Station (ISS) using U.S. assets, which includes: \$3 billion to use the lab we built using commercial flights for cargo, and \$821 million for commercial crew vehicles to take astronauts to ISS. And the third priority is building the James Webb Space Telescope, a request of \$658 million, to keep Webb on-track and on-budget for a 2018 launch.

"In supporting those priorities, NASA has made some tough choices. Science is level-funded at \$5 billion. Funding for SLS and Orion is cut \$184 million below fiscal year 2013. Additionally, NASA was cut by another five percent across the board in 2013, due to sequestration. We want to hear from Administrator Bolden on how a cut like that will impact NASA's ability to carry out its mission.

"I want a balanced space program that funds: science; space exploration with both humans and robots; aeronautics; and reliable space transportation. For science, this budget request will keep NASA's near term launches on track. This is good news. This budget funds important science missions to explore our solar system and the universe, to better understand the Sun, and to observe and protect our planet. However, I am concerned that the budget does not invest adequately in future missions. This budget cuts planetary science by \$168 million – especially Mars missions. It cancels planning for top priority Earth Science missions, and it inadequately funds a future Dark energy mission with only \$200,000 requested for planning. We must keep making progress on the National Academies' decadal surveys, now and in the future.

"Last year, we witnessed Space X successfully launch cargo to the International Space Station, showing the results of partnership between NASA and the private sector. On Sunday, Orbital test-launched out of Wallops, thus starting its own missions to the Space Station this summer and launching 400 new high tech jobs on the Eastern Shore. SpaceX has created 1,500 jobs since it became part of the commercial cargo program in 2006.

"Nationwide, aerospace industries create a \$50 billion trade surplus for the United States, and NASA should be a partner with them. NASA-developed capabilities, like the satellite servicing group at Goddard, have the potential to create jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow. These are innovation jobs that cannot be outsourced. That's why we have a strong coalition of 'Space Senators' - we believe in NASA's ability to bring out the best of America.

"However, to keep that support during frugal times, we are counting on NASA to focus on oversight and accountability. GAO's most recent assessment of NASA's large projects found NASA's cost and schedule performance on major projects has improved since GAO's first assessment in 2009. Average cost growth and schedule have decreased to about a third of their 2009 levels. I especially appreciate NASA's efforts to keep the James Webb Space Telescope onschedule and on-budget. This is all good news but NASA must remain vigilant. More than 80 percent of NASA's funding is awarded by contract. That's more than \$14 billion of NASA's 2014 request. NASA's Inspector General has identified project and contract management and cybersecurity as top challenges for the agency. We appreciate Inspector General Martin's written testimony on how NASA has implemented his recommendations.

"Frugal times demand a frugal space agency. Our space programs must be affordable, balanced and wisely managed, in order to gain support in frugal times. But we also want to make sure that NASA has what it needs to carry out its mission, to explore the universe, to understand and protect our planet, and to create new technologies that lead to new breakthroughs, creating jobs of the future."

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